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1975/04/08

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SECRET 080200Z VIA MARTIN CHANNEL

FROM: AMBASSADOR MARTIN SAIGON 0687 IMMEDIATE
TO: GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT
DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

1. AT 0825 THIS MORNING, A F-5 MADE TWO RUNS OVER THE PALACE DROPPING TWO BOMBS, ONE OF WHICH HIT IN THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, THE OTHER SOME 30 METERS AWAY FROM THE PALACE. ASIDE FROM SOME BROKEN GLASS AND ONE AIDE WHO BROKE HIS HAND WHEN HE SLIPPED AND FELL IN THE EXITEMENT, NO INJURIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED.

2. PRESIDENT'S AIDE TELEPHONED ME TO SAY THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT AND CONDUCTING BUSINESS AS USUAL.

3. IN A CHECK WITH THE AIR BASES, IT APPEARS THAT TWO F-5S TOOK OFF FROM BIEN HOA FRAGGED TO CARRY OUT A BOMBING MISSION IN THE PHAN THIET AREA, AND ONE YOUNG PILOT DIVERTED TO VENT HIS FRUSTRATIONS ON THE PALACE. AN OBSERVER WATCHING THE PILOT COMING OUT OF THE FIRST BOMBING RUN IN A TIGHT BARREL ROLL CLUCKED IN DISAPPROVAL AT SUCH UNPROFESSIONAL TACTICS WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE HIM MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS ANYTHING OTHER THAN AN INDIVIDUAL ACT. A CHECK WITH THE VARIOUS COMMANDERS HAS TENTATIVELY SO CONFIRMED.

4. A DIRECT CHECK WITH MARSHAL KY INDICATES HIS SHOCK, DISAPPROVAL AND DISMAY WHICH I AM INCLINED TO ACCEPT. I AM SENDING THIS PRELIMINARY REPORT IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY KEEP THE INCIDENT IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE, I.E., AN INDIVIDUAL ACT RATHER THAN HAVE IT INTERPRETED IN WASHINGTON AS THE BEGINNING EITHER OF A COUP OR VOF A DISINTEGRATION WHICH WOULD TEMPT SOMEONE TO UNLOCK THE COVER ON THE PANIC BUTTON. WILL KEEP YOU IMMEDIATELY INFORMED IF SUBSFQUENT INFORMATION INDICATES ABOVE ANALYSIS TO BE INCORRECT, BUT WE DOUBT THAT IT IS MORE THAN WE HAVE DESCRIBED.

5. WARMEST REGARDS.

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HAK, SCOWCROFT, MCFARLANE, RODMAN

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